



Historic District Commission
Planning & Zoning Department
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Guideline #6 Painting

These Guidelines have been developed by the Historic District Commission to assist applicants. Each request will be reviewed individually by the Commission based on its own merit. Exceptions to these guidelines may be made by the Commission on a case by case basis. The examples used in the guidelines reflect buildings in the district which are Victorian, but alterations to a building should reflect the era in which the building was constructed. Painting in the Historic District can be approved by the Museum Director or Curator, who reserves the right to submit requests to the Paint Sub-Committee who reserves the right to submit it to the Commission at their discretion.

The Historic District Commission uses the Secretary of the Interior's [Standards for Rehabilitation](#) as interpreted by the [Preservation Briefs](#). Copies are available at the Manistee County Historical Museum and the Planning & Zoning Department at City Hall.

Painting can be one of the simplest and most dramatic improvements one can make to a facade. It gives the facade a well-maintained appearance and is essential to the long life of the many traditional materials. The steps below should be followed to insure a quality job.

- Catalogue all the facade materials to be painted. Since they have different properties, these materials may require different paints or procedures. Consult a local expert for advice. Plan to use only quality materials.
- Make any necessary repairs to surfaces before starting; replace rotten wood, repoint masonry mortar joints, remove rust from metal, etc.
- Carefully prepare each surface per manufacturer's instructions for the paint being used. This will include scraping, sanding, and thorough cleaning. This surface preparation is an extremely important step toward a good finish job.
- Apply the paint per instructions. Paint only in satisfactory weather and plan to use a primer as a first coat for better surface adhesion. Follow with two coats of the final color.
- **Do not paint a brick or stone building that was never painted unless these materials require a protective coating to prevent deterioration.**

Metal Decoration - Most metal decorative elements require regular paint and maintenance to avoid deterioration.

Metal Flashing - Most sheet metal flashing, gutters, and downspouts require paint to prevent rust and corrosion

Wood Decoration - Decorative elements easily deteriorate if paint is not properly maintained. Prime all sides of new wood used in repair and/or replacement to insure long life.

Masonry - Natural brick or stone should NOT be painted. Existing paint on these materials can be chemically removed (NO SANDBLASTING!) or repainted.

Metal Storefront - Metal storefront parts (cast iron, sheet metal, window frames, etc.) should be painted to prevent rust and corrosion.

Wood Storefront - Wood storefront parts (windows, doors, panels, decoration, etc.) should be repainted regularly.

COLORS

Colors should visually relate building elements to each other, and also individual facades to each other. The colors chosen for any facade should be compatible with the neighboring facade, and with the blockscape as a whole, but at the same time give character to the building.

Choice of Colors

Three to five colors were often used on any given facade. This includes any "Natural" colors such as unpainted brick or stone.

- < Base Color
- < Major Trim Color(s)
- < Minor Trim Colors and/or Accent Colors



Because the amount of sun can change the appearance of a paint color, paint chips should be checked on both sunny and cloudy days. Painting a small section of the building in the chosen colors is the best way to check the effects of the colors on the building.

In the end, color choice is a personal decision. It is an expression of the building owner, and the businesses located in the building. If the same basic color and paint guidelines are kept in mind, color can add to the richness and variety of Manistee's historic commercial buildings.

The color of the upper wall surface and the storefront piers is the base color. **If these elements are not currently painted, they should not be painted.** Paint can sometimes be removed from painted elements to reestablish their natural brick color and texture (no harsh chemicals or sandblasting).



Base Color

In general, the base color is the color of the basic facade wall. Often this color is the natural appearance of the masonry. When painted, the base color should relate harmoniously with that of other facades on the street.

If these elements are to be painted the choice of a base color is of primary importance. The upper walls and piers could also be painted a different shade of one color to enhance the general patterns and detail of the brick. Generally the use of bright colors including stark white should be avoided.

The major trim elements are those which define the facade. These elements include the upper cornice, the lower cornice, decorative window caps and sills, and storefront columns.

Major Trim Color

The major trim color is used on the construction and decorative elements which define the facade. This color should be used on both the upper facade and storefront to tie the facade together as a whole.

When the base color is natural brick, the major trim colors should relate to the brick color. When the wall surface is painted, the trim color should complement the base color(s). Use of the same major trim color on the upper facade and on the storefront is recommended to visually tie the facade together. Again avoid the use of bright colors and stark white.



The minor trim elements could be the same color as the major trim. The use of only one trim color places a greater importance on the base color. If there are only a few minor trim elements, all the trim could be painted one color in order to strengthen its overall visual impact.



Minor Trim Color

The minor trim color(s) are used primarily as an accent to highlight the architectural details of the facade. Elements such as window sash and doors can be emphasized. Care should be taken in choosing additional colors in a scheme.

If the minor trim is painted a third color, it should strengthen the color scheme already established by the base and major trim colors. In some cases, subtle accent colors can effectively enhance the character of the entire facade. Extreme care should always be taken when choosing additional trim and accent colors. The steps below should be followed:

- Colors, paints and techniques available at the time of construction of building (i.e. no neon or florescent paint colors on an 1890's building) are to be used.
- Metallic paints are not appropriate in most cases in the Manistee Historic District as base or trim colors, but in some applications may be a appropriate in a small amount as a minor accent color.
- Wood on storefronts in Manistee was generally painted rather than varnished. Painting is recommended.
- Maintenance with the same color requires no approval (yes, repaint that sash).
- Painting the building with the same colors or with color schemes following the guidelines may be approved by the Manistee County Historical Museum Director or Curator.
- Color schemes that do not follow the guidelines must be approved by the Historic District Commission.
- A building owner may request Historic District Commission review and/or approval of any paint scheme.
- The Manistee County Historical Museum Director or Curator may require Historic District Commission review or approval of any proposed paint scheme at his discretion.